Fate of Prasar Bharati Board

690. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the fate of the Prasar Bharati Board and its Chief Executive after the lapse of the Prasar Bharati Ordinance;

(b) in the absence of the ordinance and relevant legislation have AIR and Doordarshan reverted to the Minister of Information and Broadcasting;

(c) if not, where do the Prasar Bharati Board and the Chief Executive figure in the administrative set up, policy formulation and the day to day programming; and

(d) whether the independence of the Prasar Bharati Board been diluted?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) There has been no change in their status.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The Prasar Bharati Board is responsible for the general superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Corporation.

(d) No, Sir.

Rationalising Tax Structure/Censorship for Film Industry

691. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to accord industry status to film media and are contemplating rationalising of tax structure and streamlining of methods at present followed in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government would ensure that film industry make good character building films with Indian cultural values instead of making "sexy" and indecent films which are spoiling character of our youths; and

(c) what were the suggestions made at a recently held National Conference on "Challenges before Indian Cinema" held in Mumbai and reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir. Recommendations have also been made in regard to rationalisation of certain taxation issues which have a bearing on the film industry.

(b) The film industry is primarily in the private sector. The Government encourages the growth and development of good cinema through the institution of the national awards. Further, the National Film Development Corporation finances production of low budget films having socially relevant themes.

(c) The major suggestions made at the Conference include reduction/abolition of entertainment tax, declaration of the film sector as an industry, rationalisation of certain taxation measures concerning the film industry, protecton of copy rights of film producers, establishment of an Export Promotion Council for films, review of censorship provisions, resumption of telecast of regional films on Doordarshan's national channel and provision of financial assistance to independent documentary film makers. These suggestions, as well as other issues raised by the film industry from time to time, are constantly reviewed and appropriate decisions taken.

Cigarette/Liquor Advertisement on Satellite Televison Programmes

692. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken note of the plethora of cigarette and liquor advertisements in satellite television programmes;

(b) whether advertisements of this nature are not considered harmful to the national interests; and

(c) whether following the example set by a number of Asian nations, it is proposed to regulate telecasts of such advertisements?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal at a very formative stage.

Proposal for FM Radio/HPTV Stations at Junagarh

693. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal was sent by the Government of Gujarat to the Central Government for establishment of FM Radio station and a HPTV station at Junagarh in 1996;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the proposal has been dropped for the present;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the proposal is being included in the next five year plan; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) A proposal for setting up of 5 KW FM Transmitter, MP Studios, Dubbing Room, Receiving facilities, Staff Quarters, etc. and a High Power TV Transmitter has been included in the draft 9th Five Year Plan.

TV/Radio Stations in North-Eastern Region

694. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are fewer TV and radio stations in North-eastern region as compared to its needs; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/contemplated to set up more such stations keeping in view the ethnic and cultural multiplicity of the region?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) TV Studio Centres are presently functioning at all North Eastern state capitals and also at Silchar, Dibrugarh and Tura. Besides, there is a Regional Programme Production Centre at Guwahati. For relay of primary channel (DD I) and Metro Channel (DD II) programmes 88 and 9 Transmitters respectively of varying power are functioning in North Eastern States.

It is the constant endeavour of the Government to improve TV and Radio services in the entire country with special emphasis to North-Eastern States. Presently, 32 TV Transmitter projects and 14 All India Radio projects are under various stages of implementation in North Eastern States. Satellite uplinking facilities are also presently available at Guwahati and are under implementation at the remaining stations in North Eastern region.

Loss suffered by Doordarshan due to NDTV

695. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the CBI has seized files relating to NDTV as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 25th April, 1998;